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ABSTRACT

Presented are six brief papers (three to five pages) from a symposium focusing on roles which volunteers can play for mentally retarded persons in terms of direct service, community leadership, and motivation of governments toward acceptance of responsibility. The papers examine the following issues: the roles of volunteers as innovators, coordinators of services and programs, expeditors, and advocates; volunteer youth organizations in the United States, Canada, and Sweden; leadership training programs for volunteers; the relationship between volunteers and professionals; the importance of social action to educate and mobilize the community; and the necessity of cooperative efforts with governmental agencies. The International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped is explained. Included is a declaration on the rights of mentally retarded persons. (GW)

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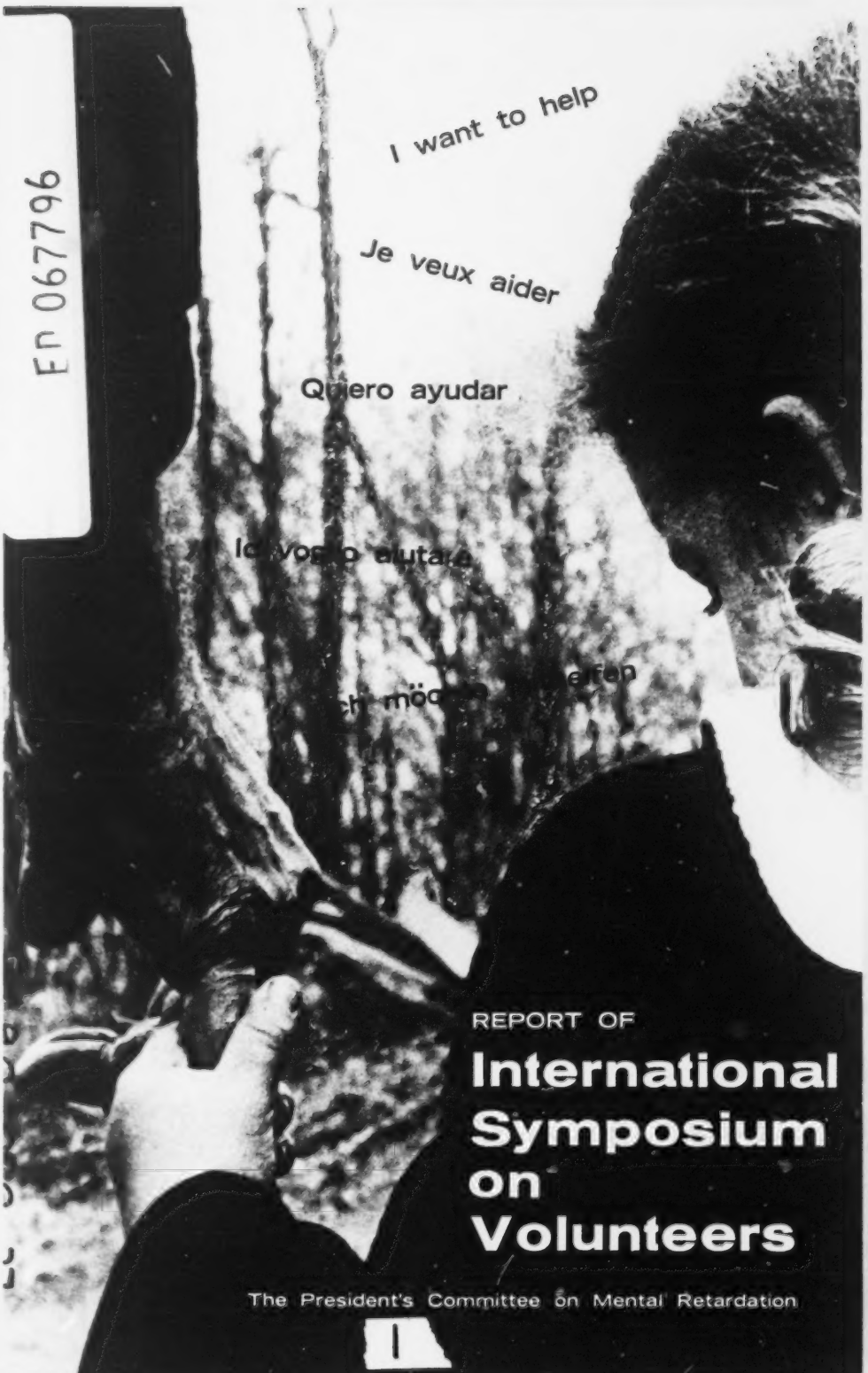

REPORT OF

International Symposium on Volunteers

The President's Committee on Mental Retardation

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ED 067796

International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped: Symposium on Volunteers

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—
October 18-22, 1971

Sponsors:

The President's Committee on Mental Retardation
Washington, D. C. 20201

The National Association for Retarded Children
Arlington, Texas 76011

Social and Rehabilitation Services
U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington, D. C. 20201

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FOREWORD

At the symposium on Residential Care for the Mentally Handicapped held in Frankfurt, Germany in 1969 a paper by Mme. Yvonne Posternak entitled "Involvement and Participation of Parents and Volunteers" stimulated considerable discussion and revealed differing opinions regarding the volunteer working with and for the mentally handicapped. It was agreed that a symposium to discuss on an international level the different concepts of volunteerism in the field of mental retardation would be beneficial.

The National Association for Retarded Children (U.S.A.) was selected to host this symposium. The President's Committee on Mental Retardation agreed to cosponsor the symposium, and assisted the NARC in obtaining a grant from the Social and Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to cover basic costs. Volunteers and staff of the two sponsoring agencies worked closely together in planning and conducting the five-day meeting, which was held at the International House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 18–22, 1971.

Eight working papers were written by invited experts and sent to all participants in advance of the symposium. Each paper was discussed in a half-day session chaired by one of the experts other than the author. Discussion of each paper was summarized by the chairman and two recorders. These summaries were presented to the participants for comment and modification. The conclusions and recommendations were reached by the entire group during the final session and were referred by them to Mrs. Pauline Holroyd, Oxford, England, to be put into finished form. The symposium participants are grateful to her for excellent handling of the report. Minimal editing was completed by the editorial committee.

Mrs. Philip Elkin
Chairman of the Symposium
Past President, NARC
Chairman, NARC International Relations Committee

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INTRODUCTION

The wide diversity in the development of services for the mentally retarded around the world is recognized as depending upon historical and socio-economic factors in each country. This spectrum ranges from countries where specialized services are provided for a limited number of retarded persons and their families by individuals or volunteer groups, to those countries where public authorities provide a total range of care from cradle to grave. In most countries, services are provided according to a variety of mixed systems, with governmental agencies and voluntary organizations sharing responsibilities.

In some communities the independent association for the mentally handicapped is considered to be the focal point for all forces that represent retarded people and wish to work for the amelioration and prevention of mental retardation.

In the United States and Canada there is a longstanding tradition of community service organizations. Having severed family ties with relatives in their homeland, immigrants from the beginning became dependent upon each other. This sense of concern and responsibility of neighbors for neighbors has continued as the societies became increasingly mobile. Service to the community is a way of life for many people. Growing up in this tradition, youth is a great potential force for service.

It has been recognized that most mentally retarded persons can live in the community if necessary supportive services are provided to them and to their families. As the community accepts this responsibility and the principle of normalization is accorded due credibility, manpower needs become increasingly evident. The role which the volunteer can play in this changing panorama in terms of direct service, community leadership and motivation of governments to accept their rightful responsibilites was the focus of the symposium.

(L to r) Tibor Gregor of Canada, Emmanuel Buenzod of Switzerland, and Mrs. Betty Kane, French interpreter, discuss overcoming language barriers.

Volunteers Working Directly with the Mentally Retarded

Mrs. Mariam Karlins, Director
Education and Manpower Development
Department of Public Welfare
U.S.A.

Summary of Presentation

Volunteers working with the retarded have an opportunity to become active in a field which offers a wide variety of exciting and rewarding experiences. Past and present areas of service include social and recreational group activities, educational programs and individual services. New roles and functions are evolving which have further potential for meeting basic human needs. Volunteers can act as innovators, as coordinators of services and programs, as expeditors—people who ensure that things get done—and as advocates. Voluntary associations are thus faced with the challenge of recognizing and keeping pace with changing trends and needs in the field, and the implications of these trends for the role of the volunteer. If there is an area of need where volunteers are not being used it is important to find out why not.

Is the organization's structure preventing the use of volunteers?

Are there relationship difficulties between volunteers and professionals? Is the problem with the volunteers' attitudes and expectations?

Is the problem with the voluntary organization's perception of its role and responsibility?

Discussion

The excellent work done by many professional people in the field of mental retardation cannot be discounted. However, as noted by one of the participants, "War is too important to be left to the generals."

When an unmet need becomes apparent, we must consider why we have not moved further and faster, and determine how much time and attention should go into the actual mobilization of manpower. Guidelines should be established for how (and how not) to use volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION: We should encourage universities and other training institutions to include in their courses material on the role and value of voluntary services, and on how to use the community-minded volunteer effectively.

Parents of the retarded need positive, constructive programs and empathy, rather than emotion and sympathy. Volunteers also need constructive and well designed programs within which to utilize their energies. People work with the retarded for a variety of motives, including the desire to create a better community. There is no point in attracting volunteers unless they are to be utilized. It is important to look at what *can* be done. A professionally trained person may become a volunteer. The valuable contributions which the professional-volunteer can make should not be overlooked in recruitment efforts. Direct services which the volunteer may assume include:

(1) Extension of staff—but
Volunteers should be used to enrich programs rather than to relieve deficiencies in staffing patterns.

(2) Extension of programs.
Introducing new and specific skills.

(3) Extension of services.
Meeting needs not yet met.

(4) Providing the human quality of caring.

There are many aspects of community work where volunteers can be especially effective. These include home training programs and parent-to-parent counseling. It is essential, however, that volunteers receive appropriate training for specific work in these areas before being assigned to work.

Volunteers have particular value in bridging the gap between the community and the residential facility. It is advantageous to officially appoint a "voluntary service organizer."

In any case, someone should always be specifically charged with the responsibility for the coordination and utilization of volunteer services. Tasks assigned to the volunteer must be clearly defined. A supervisor should be involved in training and directing volunteer workers, and should work in close liaison with the staff of the facility. Training should be designed to make the volunteers comfortable in their roles, and further training should be available as indicated by service needs.

It has been the experience of representatives of many countries that state and other institutions have been reluctant, and in some cases unwilling, to allow volunteers to participate in habilitation process and to work directly with the retarded.

RECOMMENDATION: Our association should do everything possible to gain recognition for work within the institution as well as in the community.

When institutions are being contacted to accept volunteers, they should not be presented with talk of "volunteer programs." A more appropriate approach would be to ask whether there are residents whose special needs might be met by volunteer efforts. By introducing the institution to a group of qualified volunteers capable of meeting critical needs, it should be possible to greatly reduce staff resistance to volunteer involvement.

Volunteers who work directly with the mentally retarded within an institutional setting may help considerably to bring about changes in attitudes of the staff and improvement in living conditions.

Dehumanization in an institution cannot be ended by merely introducing volunteers, but the humanizing touch they are able to provide can be of considerable value.

Volunteers should have ideas and should express them. *The training of volunteers should incorporate an awareness of their potential as agents for change.* They can act as a catalyst, bringing a new dimension

into the area where they serve by virtue of their own interests, skills and backgrounds. Volunteers must, however, achieve respect and confidence in the work they are doing before attempting to be agents of change.

Volunteers may provide a significant direct service through a coordinated advocacy program. An advocate is a person who informs, assists and gives personal support as well as friendship, usually on a one-to-one basis, to a mentally retarded person within the institution or in the community.

Successful voluntary service programs should be widely publicized in order to create increased awareness of the valuable part which volunteers can play.

Volunteers need, and are entitled to, orientation and training in order to carry out their assignments adequately and appropriately. Information on the orientation and training of volunteers may be obtained by writing to:

National Association for Retarded Children
2709 Avenue "E" East
Arlington, Texas 76011

American Association of Volunteer Services Coordinators
1700 18th Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

The American National Red Cross
National Headquarters
Washington, D. C. 20006

Action
Public Affairs
806 Connecticut Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20525

The Youth Volunteer

Mr. Ray Beechey, President
Youth Across Canada with
the Mentally Retarded
Canada

Mrs. Inger Claeson
Youth Volunteer
Forbundet for Utvecklings-
storda Barn (Swedish
National Association)
Sweden

Miss Mary Lou Nappi
Pennsylvania Youth Association
for Retarded Children
U.S.A.

Summary of Presentation

In the United States, an organization of young people, ranging in age from 13 through 25 and numbering some 30,000, constitutes a significant force in the volunteer efforts of the National Association for Retarded Children.

The members of Youth-NARC have as their prime aims:

(1) **Service.** To provide volunteer service to the mentally retarded on a one-to-one basis.

(2) **Community awareness.** To assist in creating community awareness and understanding of the mentally retarded, including their special abilities and needs.

(3) **Career motivation.** To acquire firsthand knowledge of career opportunities in the field of mental retardation.

(4) **Leadership development.** To develop leadership abilities to ensure individual and organizational improvement.

(5) **Organization.** To encourage and aid in the formation of other Youth ARC movements.

(6) **Social.** To meet and work with other young people who share these common interests and goals.

The basic purpose of Canada's youth organization, Y.A.C.M.R. (Youth Across Canada with the Mentally Retarded), is to give the mentally retarded person the opportunity to live, as much as that person is capable, the life of a normal person, and to enable that individual to reap the benefits of society to which he is entitled, but which in most cases are denied him. The role of the professional and the adult in Y.A.C.M.R. is very limited. The wide range of youth activities which have emerged across Canada emphasize the point that while adults work mainly *for* the retarded, youth works *with* the retarded. Y.A.C.M.R. members use their own imagination and ingenuity to overcome any difficulties which they may encounter in their quest to be the best friends the retarded have.

Following a seminar on leisure time activities, integrated clubs developed in Sweden when a group of retarded young people working together with non-retarded youth were given training aimed at developing independent living skills. Both groups learned a great deal from one another. The experience highlighted how important social training is, how it demands a carefully designed educational approach, and how the true potential of most retarded adolescents had been underestimated. Clubs were subsequently formed with three main aims:

(1) To break through the barriers of social isolation which often surround the retarded adolescent;

(2) To provide the mentally retarded adolescent with social training and a more pleasurable life; and

(3) To put into practice the belief that training for independent living is most effective when conducted in a normalized setting within the community.

Integration in the Swedish Clubs means that the mentally retarded adolescents are active members and, as such, are encouraged to use their

initiative and to assume increasing responsibilities for their own affairs. This concept has been extended to encompass conventions for young retarded people, four of which have now been held. Young people in Sweden feel that the only way to release the retarded from their isolation is for them to participate in integrated activities wih their non-retarded peers.

RECOMMENDATION: The high value of integrated activity should be recognized and implemented at all age levels.

Youth work has demonstrated the constructive way in which association and collaboration with young people can be effective. High priority should be given to youth volunteers working directly with the retarded. In considering how youth programs can be initiated, it was agreed that while youth groups may need some structure and support from adult associations, and usually welcome guidance, interference is inappropriate.

The adult organization may present the youth group with a list of needs and areas of potential activity, but should then encourage the young people to proceed on their own. Young people tend to minimize structure and to emphasize participation and involvement. It seems to be desirable for youth groups to be generated at a local level rather than have their structure dictated by a national association. Young people stressed that they often include the mentally retarded in planning and implementing their programs.

Liaison with adult groups is desirable, and it may be useful to have cross-representation on boards and committees.

RECOMMENDATION: All associations should encourage and support youth involvement, allowing youth themselves to decide the amount of formal organization they need and to plan their own activities.

When a permanent staff member is assigned to the young people's group by the adult organization, it is essential that this person be oriented toward the contemporary youth culture. It has been demon-

strated that children as young as 11 or 12 years can be encouraged to participate in young people's programs, thereby creating a valuable auxiliary service to the basic youth group.

Word-of-mouth communication regarding youth group goals and activities has proven to be an effective recruitment strategy. Public information and education programs sponsored by young people are also viable means of developing awareness of, and interest in, youth activities.

The area of recreation was cited as an excellent vehicle for meaningful interaction between young people and the mentally retarded.

RECOMMENDATION: Funds should be sought from all governmental levels to develop social and recreational services for the handicapped in general and the mentally retarded in particular.

There was a request for youth participation in the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped 1972 Montreal meeting. Young people were invited to attend the meeting and to send materials and information for display purposes.

The President of the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped Invited the three youth panelists to be the first members of the Youth Committee on the International League.

Training the Volunteer for Leadership and Service

Mrs. Mary Ann Jensen
Past Chairman
Organization Development Committee
National Association for Retarded Children
U.S.A.

Summary of Presentation

Traditionally, training for volunteers in the field of mental retardation is thought of as an attempt to develop (1) an understanding of mental retardation and the problems of the retarded; and (2) the skills which volunteers need to work with the retarded in a direct service capacity. Another dimension of volunteer training has frequently been overlooked. This involves the development of leadership skills among volunteers in order that they may better serve their organization. The notion of leadership training in a voluntary organization is predicated upon two basic assumptions: (1) the same principles of leadership, management and administration apply in all goal-directed organizations. All such groups may be seen as having two primary dimensions: the need to produce results and the need to fulfill the needs of the individuals who comprise the organization. (2) Leadership is a skill which can be learned. Leaders are made, not born.

In the National Association for Retarded Children two care programs of leadership training exist. One is the Leadership Training Seminar. The seminar focuses upon the individual and upon providing him with an understanding of the process of human interaction, decision-making and communication. The second program is the Organizational Developmental Workshop. Here the emphasis is upon applying the individual skills for the future growth of the organization. This workship is concerned with fostering a systematic approach to change, by developing an ideal organization model and devising

specific strategies to close the gap between the ideal model and the present level of the organization.

Ideally, leadership training will be made available to all members of the voluntary organization. This involves:

(1) Developing detailed written materials for seminar and workshop participants and persons who will be conducting the training session; and

(2) Identifying participants who appear to possess the motivation and skills needed to be trainers and teaching them to conduct training programs for other volunteers.

It is thus possible to develop a qualified cadre of volunteer trainers from a small initial core group. The existing structure of the volunteer organization (e.g., its local, state and national components) may be used to disseminate the training programs to all members.

A leadership training program can contribute significantly to the overall growth of voluntary organizations. Specific benefits can also be derived. For example, the volunteer association can conduct training programs for the staff of public agencies, thereby establishing the basis for and/or strengthening sound working relationships.

Discussion

Different countries contributed a wide range of reactions to leadership training, and described a variety of training and orientation programs in their own areas. Present approaches to training include the following:

(a) Seminars which take place during a residential weekend aimed at providing information and education concerning association affairs. The emphasis is on imparting certain skills in organization procedures rather than upon developing individual leadership abilities.

(b) Tripartite programs which include the instruction of students, training for paid staff of the association, and training parents and

others to understand and deal constructively with the problems a retarded child may present.

(c) The retarded themselves may be trained in leadership. Seminars are organized which develop the skills of social interaction with non-retarded people.

Other countries felt that they would have few volunteers willing to take a leadership course, or indicated that they were still chiefly concerned with finding volunteers rather than training them. Nevertheless, unanimous interest in leadership training was expressed.

RECOMMENDATION: Voluntary associations should give serious consideration to implementing training programs aimed at developing the leadership potential of their individual members and the effectiveness and resources of their organizations.

It is necessary that the leadership training a person receives should be used to help the organization. However, if only one person has taken such training there is a distinct possibility that he may forget or not have the opportunity to use what he has been taught. Also, an individual may have difficulty in implementing new concepts because the organization may be afraid of change and new methods. For successful implementation a leader with these new skills needs continuing support. Therefore, it is suggested that an effort be made to provide leadership training for all members of the association. The trainer should make a point of following up with those people who have participated in a course to facilitate application of what has been learned.

It is also considered important that the leadership training program receive constant re-evaluation in order that the content is geared to meet changing needs. When trying to improve skills of those who perform direct services, it is important that leadership skills should also be developed in those responsible for policy-making within the association. It was considered desirable that training programs should include paid staff as well as volunteers.

Those Who Knew . . .

"Hate-filled,"
Those who knew said.
And he climbed sleepily into my lap ...
He buried his tousled head
in my cool green sweatshirt
And wrapped his grubby arms
about my neck ...

"Uncontrollable,"
Those who knew said.
And he lay quietly beside me
listening to my fairy tales
and lullabyes ...

"Refuses to participate,"
Those who knew said.
And he took my hands and
let himself be led into the
midst of dancing and singing ...

"Will not cooperate,"
Those who knew said.
And he stood beside me drying the dishes
I had washed ...

"Will not speak,"
Those who knew said.
And we walked through the forest,
talking of birds
and squirrels and
flowers ...

"Incapable of love,"

Those who knew said,
And he planted a slobbery little boy
kiss on my
cheek ...

"Hopeless,"
Those who knew said ...
And he sang with me
of stars and
happiness ...
He smiled with me at silly jokes ...

THOSE WHO KNEW

FORGOT

ABOUT

LOVE.

By Julie Parsons
TORCH (Idaho YARC) State President
1970-1971

To have a successful leadership seminar, the following are needed:

(a) Recruitment of good volunteers.

(b) A well-planned seminar.

(c) Competent resource people.

A leadership seminar should train people to accept change, and to accept the fart that *what was good in the past is not necessarily what will be the best for the future.*

Prof. Heinz Bach of Germany (r) brings some new ideas and refreshment to USA representatives Charles Mitchel and Dr. Rosemary Dybwad.

The Volunteer and the Professional

Mr. Tibor P. Gregor
President, Canadian Association
for the Mentally Retarded
Canada

Summary of Presentation

Since the time of a general awakening of a social conscience the images of the volunteer and the professional have had to undergo certain drastic changes. There is no longer a clearly delineated distinction between the roles of the two groups with regard to the provision of services to mentally retarded persons and their families. A *volunteer* may be described as a person who undertakes a task of his own free will. He comes forward and offers his services, his talents, his skills; he gives freely of his time, seeking no reward other than a sense of achievement. He may be motivated by a wish to serve his community, or a desire to help solve the problems of his fellow men. He is a citizen who wants to be involved and who recognizes that initiative and leadership, in order to be effective, must come from within society.

The *professional* ordinarily spends many years of study and hard work in preparation for becoming an expert in his field. He too offers his services, talents and skills—and when accepted, expects to make a career in his area of expertise and to receive adequate remuneration so that he can devote himself to his task on a full-time basis.

As in every other partnership, maintaining the equilibrium between volunteers and professionals is a most delicate task. Nothing could be more harmful to the progress of a well ordered program for the retarded than a power struggle between volunteers and professionals. In a cooperative effort roles may change, and may overlap, but never should they remain hermetically sealed into compartments that would benefit nobody, except the egos that promote such selfish interests.

Discussion

A volunteer in the field of mental retardation needs strong motivation, which may arise from being the parent of a mentally handicapped child, or from social concern. The volunteer may have no specific prior training in the field of mental retardation, but can nevertheless make significant contributions. There are many professional people (often employed in other fields) who give a great deal of their time to working on a voluntary basis in serving the cause of the retarded person.

A primary function of the volunteer and the voluntary organization is to look after the interests of retarded people—to act as their advocates and to represent the consumer's point of view.

Volunteers play an important role in

(a) influencing public opinion

(b) participating in policy making and implementing

(c) acting as pressure groups

(d) tendering direct services

(e) where necessary, raising funds for direct services

Member societies of the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped have, for the most part, started as parent groups. Interested and concerned citizens have joined together to form a driving force for better understanding· improvement in policy and advances in service for the retarded. They have sought the help of professionals for advice in policy making, in implementation of policy and for help in providing services.

RECOMMENDATION: Parents should be represented on planning, policy making and administrative bodies to represent the point of view of the consumer.

Volunteers and professionals should complement each other. There is a need for mutual sharing of information, acceptance and trust. It was stressed that more comprehensive training of professionals who

work in areas related to mental retardation should be encouraged. It was also considered desirable that all professionals should be taught how to use the help of volunteers.

Professionals may have divergent interests, limited to specific aspects of the problem of mental retardation. The role of the volunteer in ensuring the establishment of a collaborative and comprehensive program was emphasized.

RECOMMENDATION: Volunteers and professionals should each recognize the importance of the other and the necessity of close collaboration in reaching their common goal.

Another aspect of collaboration is that which must exist between the executive (paid) staff and volunteers of an association. Policies are made by the volunteer board and implemented by the executive staff in conjunction with the volunteer members. Executive staff can be expected to provide professional advice and leadership.

The problem of mental retardation is a community responsibility where there should be no conflict of interest. The associations for the retarded can provide an ideal vehicle for bringing together volunteers and professionals.

The Volunteer and Social Action

Mrs. Pauline Holroyd
Member, Oxford and District Society
for Mentally Handicapped Children
England

Summary of Presentation

If social action on behalf of the mentally retarded is to be effective, every effort that is made should have the greatest possible impact on the largest possible number of people. Full use should be made of every available resource at the same time as mobilizing new resources. People and agencies must be recruited, educated and mobilized, and their interest and commitment maintained. Important functions of a voluntary organization are to educate and to arouse public opinion. It is essential to be known and to make a sustained impact by means of educational programs, publicity, personal contacts and infiltration into relevant bodies (e.g., local government and boards of institutions).

Associations should do everything possible to see that omissions and inadequacies are remedied by appropriate statutory bodies before providing or subsidizing missing services. Even when voluntary agencies take it upon themselves to fill gaps in services, they should enlist cooperation, and as far as possible, financial support, from all agencies who may be even remotely concerned. Whenever a small local effort is undertaken it should be thought of as a piece of scaffolding or a rivet in the structure of a major social reform.

Social action by volunteers involves finding more volunteers, making full use of them, and keeping them interested and committed. There are considerable numbers of people in the community who have the potential to be concerned and to concern themselves with the needs of the mentally retarded. Above all there must be communication—for learning, for sharing experience and for reinforcing achievement.

Discussion

Who is to be involved in social action to serve the needs of the mentally retarded? Appropriate persons must be identified and positive attitudes must be developed. The entire community should be surveyed in seeking resources that may be tapped. Different attitudes and skills must be accepted and utilized with an openness to change. Every successful effort needs to be publicized in order to have an impact upon the community.

No group should be eliminated through predetermined attitudes (e.g., minorities, the poor, the inarticulate, etc.). It is important that an association should not develop as a dictatorial group which disallows the contribution and the thinking of the less bold and aggressive. In utilizing individual skills, rather than arbitrarily delegating duties, diversity of talent should be allowed and opportunities made for a variety of contributions.

There are many ways of reaching people other than through publicity. To utilize to the full the natural resources of parents, sensitive response to their early needs is essential. Communication with the general public can be by means of person-to-person contacts, by means of surveys or questionnaires administered on a personal level, by public education and by enlisting all interested agencies to cooperate in mutual social action efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: Associations should ensure that channels of communication are opened and maintained with all agencies in their area which may be concerned with the mentally retarded. Voluntary organizations, as well as agencies of law, law enforcement, medical, social and educational agencies, should be considered.

The need for social action after services are provided by the government is self-evident in terms of public acceptance of the retarded and the need to continue to develop and implement innovative service delivery models. In addition, priorities of government may shift (e.g., the more severely handicapped may be threatened with loss of services

if funding agencies demand economic productivity as a criterion for service eligibility). Therefore, social action acts as a control apparatus for comprehensive services. By involvement, voluntary associations can initiate and modify political action.

RECOMMENDATION: The attention of associations should be drawn to their role, not only in informing, influencing and persuading citizens to action, but also through citizens, their governments.

It is particularly important to consider the expressions of those in the lower socioeconomic level of society. Ways of reaching people include personal contacts, contacts through agencies and public education programs. Cooperation between voluntary and public agencies is essential in reaching families. Personal contacts through home visits, health services, early education programs and evaluation programs provide an opportunity for communication as well as service.

Courses can be arranged for information, and on communication skills. Parent counseling and education courses ensure that mutual aid is fully and appropriately used. Professionals need to learn to communicate in the language of the lay public in order to relate to the needs of the people with whom they are dealing. Awareness of mental retardation should be encouraged in children, and can be developed early in the educational process.

RECOMMENDATION: Associations should be instrumental in ensuring that adequate and appropriate knowledge of the subject of mental retardation is part of the curriculum in the training of the medical and other professions. Associations should also ensure that this knowledge is kept up to date by organizing instructional sessions, multidisciplinary meetings and seminars.

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights concerns all human beings, and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child specifically includes those who are handicapped, because mentally retarded

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children and adults represent an especially vulnerable group in society, historically neglected and generally unable to speak for themselves, a special declaration on their rights is justified in order to draw the attention of governments and the public to their specific problems and to serve as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of their rights. Such a declaration has been developed by the International League.

RECOMMENDATION: Associations should take action now to have the League's Declaration of General and Special Rights of the Mentally Retarded recognized and accepted by their legislative bodies as a step forward in their work towards ensuring its implementation.

As with any other agency, complacency is a danger to the voluntary organization. Evaluation of the organization's effectiveness lies, in the final analysis, in the acceptance, understanding and support of the general public.

Voluntary Work and Governmental Action

Mr. M. Emmanuel Michel Buenzod
Vice President de la Federation Suisse
Switzerland

Summary of Presentation

As a result of new social concepts, most countries recognize, although to varying degrees, that society should provide needed basic and supportive services for the mentally retarded. Little by little, responsibility is being substituted for charity. In some countries government action permits families of the mentally retarded to be relieved by the State of all costs for serving the retarded family member. In other countries the State refrains from any intervention and the entire burden is assumed by voluntary organizations. This may be due to a matter of principle (e.g., a firm commitment to the old concept of charity) or to a state of necessity (e.g., seriously limited financial resources).

The most favorable situation occurs when, based on intense government activity on behalf of the mentally retarded, volunteer organizations actively cooperate with government public service agencies, while conserving their role as a "pressure group." The objective is to obtain a program of comprehensive services for the mentally retarded throughout their life cycle. Only public agencies are capable of financing, effectively implementing and maintaining such services for extended periods of time.

These considerations are equally applicable to research and prevention programs in the area of mental retardation.

It is vitally important that parents, professionals and other members of voluntary organizations lend their commitment, enthusiasm and expertise to cooperative efforts with governmental agencies in order to ensure sound and broad-based services for the mentally retarded.

Discussion

In most countries, there is currently a mixed system in which governmental agencies and voluntary organizations share responsibilities.

There is agreement on the basic principle that mentally retarded persons have the same rights as others to health, education and social services and that in the long run only public authorities are capable of providing maximum services, directly or through subsidies.

However, it is felt strongly that there will always be an indispensable need for voluntary action:

(a) In direct collaboration with governmental planning bodies representing the interests of the consumer—as the voice of the mentally retarded, and as the advocate or stimulator to promote the optimum development of services.

(b) To provide, through public education and information programs, the broad basis of knowledge and acceptance without which government planning cannot be effective.

RECOMMENDATION: Volunteers should be involved in governmental decision making concerned with the mentally retarded.

While individual volunteers can be effective in working with government, the greatest results come from the collective action of organizations of volunteers—parents, interested citizens and professional workers motivated to seek change and improvement.

In many countries associations have stimulated government action by initiating pilot programs. Where these services continue to be managed by non-governmental organizations it is necessary to have government subsidies. Standards for services must be established and implemented.

The extent to which governments assume responsibility for provision or support of services is strongly influenced by the joint cooperation between voluntary, professional and official agencies.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to realize the aim of providing

mentally retarded persons with a full spectrum of services and programs, governments should be urged to establish a high level department to assume responsibility for planning and coordination of services to fulfill the needs of all those members of society who, by reason of their handicap, require special consideration.

The function of associations as "pressure groups" is often mentioned. Pressure must indeed be directed toward society in general. While it may sometimes be needed in relation to government, more often what is needed is information, stimulation and broad citizen support.

Where basic and widespread public services are available and the voluntary organization is providing supplementary service, its independence must be fully maintained.

RECOMMENDATION: Government departments concerned with the mentally retarded should incorporate fair representation of association of volunteers.

It is maintained that whatever the specific form of voluntary governmental relationship may be, cooperation, communication and coordination are essential.

On the international level, the influence of the voluntary movement is increasingly recognized through the official consultative status which has been granted to the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped by the United Nations Economic and Security Council and the U.N. specialized agencies concerned: the World Health Organization, UNESCO and the International Labor Office. The fact that a Declaration of Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (based on the League's Declaration of General and Special Rights) has been adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on recommendation of ECOSOC has extreme significance for world-wide future developments.

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INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF SOCIETIES FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

The League was brought into being in World Mental Health Year 1960, by representatives of parent organizations, professional groups and by individuals anxious to advance the interests of the mentally handicapped without regard to nationality, race or creed.

Through the creation of a common bond of understanding between parents and others interested in the problems of the mentally handicapped, the League hopes to secure on their behalf from all possible sources the provision of efficient remedial, residential, educational, training, employment and welfare services.

The League seeks to realize its objects by:

a) the interchange of experts and information, on the developing services for mentally handicapped;

b) the exchange of workers in the field of mental handicap between one country and another;

c) the comparative study of legislation in member countries and beyond, concerning the mentally handicapped and the promotion and implementation of some in their favour.

At present, the International League has 39 National Member Societies. It has members in 57 countries.

The four previous congresses of the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped were held in London (U.K.) in October 1961, in Brussels (Belgium) in October 1963, in Paris (France) in March 1966 and in Jerusalem (Israel) in October 1968.

The 5th congress of the International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped will take place in Montreal, Canada, in October 1972.

The League also holds symposia and conferences of experts on special topics relating to the services for the retarded.

The League is in official relations with UNESCO, ECOSOC, ILO

and WHO, as well as with international non-governmental organizations interested in the handicapped.

The Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons that had been proclaimed at the 4th congress of the ILSMH has now been officially adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on December 20th, 1971.

The League welcomes applications for membership, which is open to all parent and other national organizations working primarily in the interest of the mentally handicapped.

International League of Societies for the Mentally Handicapped
Secretariat: 12, rue Forestiere—B—1050 Bruxelles (BELGIUM)
Tel.: (02) 47.61.80

North and South American ties are strengthened by Mrs. Marianna Beach of PCMR and Hugo Ortiz Quezada of Chile.

DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

1. The mentally retarded person has, to the maximum degree of feasibility, the same rights as other human beings.

2. The mentally retarded person has a right to proper medical care and physical therapy and to such education, training, rehabilitation and guidance as will enable him to develop his ability and maximum potential.

3. The mentally retarded person has a right to economic security and to a decent standard of living. He has a right to perform productive work or to engage in any other meaningful occupation to the fullest possible extent of his capabilities.

4. Whenever possible, the mentally retarded person should live with his own family or with foster parents and participate in different forms of community life. The family with which he lives should receive assistance. If care in an institution becomes necessary, it should be provided in surroundings and other circumstances as close as possible to those of normal life.

5. The mentally retarded person has a right to a qualified guardian when this is required to protect his personal well-being and interests.

6. The mentally retarded person has a right to protection from exploitation, abuse and degrading treatment. If prosecuted for any offense, he shall have a right to due process of law with full recognition being given to his degree of mental responsibility.

7. Whenever mentally retarded persons are unable, be-

cause of the severity of their handicap, to exercise all their rights in a meaningful way or it should become necessary to restrict or deny some or all of these rights, the procedure used for that restriction or denial of rights must contain proper legal safeguards against every form of abuse. This procedure must be based on an evaluation of the social capability of the mentally retarded person by qualified experts and must be subject to periodic review and to the right of appeal to higher authorities.

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